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Missionary Medical Schools

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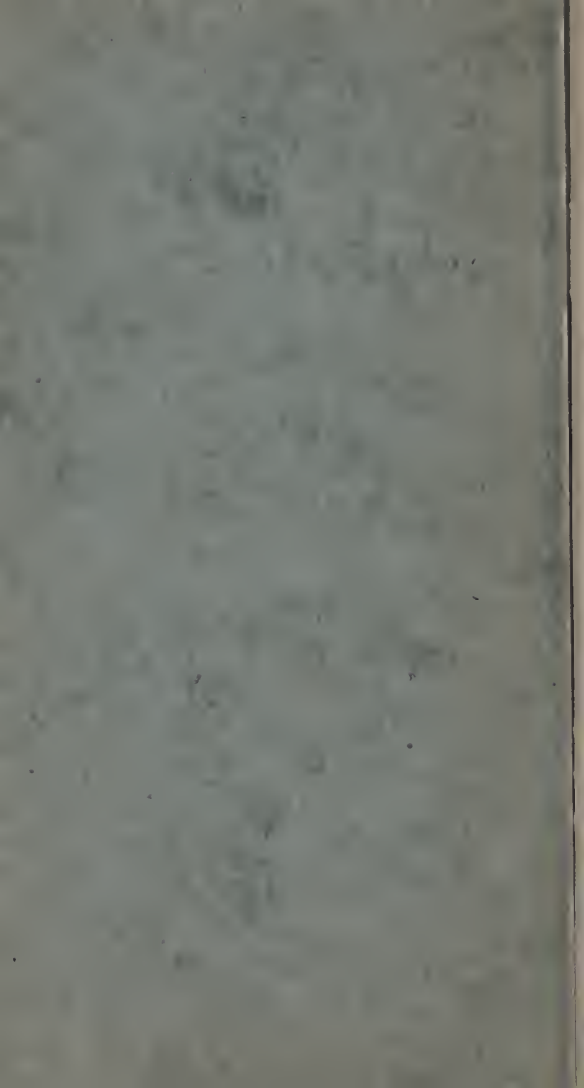
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The following is a portion of an address entitled, "Curative Christianity," delivered by Dr. Stephen Smith before the graduating class of the American Medical Missionary College, June 21, 1904:

MEDICAL MISSIONARY SCHOOLS.

The school in which the medical missionary is to receive his professional education deserves more consideration than it has hitherto received. In these latter days, science is the handmaid of God, and she is jealous for her prerogatives. During her reign no physician has been made by a direct endowment with power from on high. On the contrary, she has exacted and still more rigidly exacts, from her votaries, patient, persistent study, under trained teachers, and for long periods, in organized schools devoted to science. We can better appreciate the question now raised by briefly tracing the history of the efforts that have been made to secure the proper training of medical missionaries.

The initiative in this effort to place the medical art in its right relations with missionary enterprises was taken by that veteran pioneer, Dr. Peter Parker, an American medical missionary to China. On his return to this country, in 1841, he visited Dr. Abercrombie, one of the most eminent

physicians of the medical school of Edinburgh, Scotland, and informed him of the vast importance to the cause of foreign missions of training medical men for the service. Dr. Abercrombie was so much impressed by the statement that he called a meeting for the discussion of the subject. That meeting resulted in the formation of a society devoted to the specific purpose of sending medical aid to missionary fields. Dr. Abercrombie became president of the society, and among its members we find the names of Dr. Chalmers, Professor Syme, and others of equal rank. For upward of sixty years that society has been engaged in training medical missionaries and sending them forth, and these physicians have taken rank with the ablest graduates of the famous Edinburgh school.

London followed the example of Edinburgh and established its societies for the training of medical students to become missionaries, and the success of these trained medical students has been marvelous.

On arriving at New York, Dr. Parker made a similar appeal to the prominent physicians of that city, and the response was most cordial. A large society was formed, and for several years medical aid was freely contributed to the missionary bodies. This society did not train medical students for missionary work, but it secured from the only medical college then in New York a rebate of the fees for students intending to become missionaries. This society finally lapsed, and no further organized effort was made in this country, to aid medical missionaries until the International Medical Missionary Society was projected by Dr. George

D. Dowkontt. This society began its work along the same lines as the Edinburgh and London societies; that is, by aiding and training intending medical missionary students. For several years the medical schools of the city co-operated with the society by reducing the fees, and its success was such that it had upward of fifty students in training at one session. At length the schools determined to have no beneficiaries, and refused longer to favor the students of the society. To meet this emergency, the society proposed to create scholarships, and one school accepted the proposition. When these scholarships expired, this school refused to renew them, and thus threw upon the society the entire pecuniary burden of supporting those students who were unable to pay their expenses. Under these conditions the question of organizing an independent medical college devoted exclusively to the education of medical missionaries was raised. The proposition was received with great favor on every hand except by the medical schools, which unitedly defeated the efforts made to secure a charter.

ADVANTAGES OF SEPARATE SCHOOLS.

The arguments which were then so potent in favor of a separate and properly organized and endowed missionary medical college are more convincing today and in the presence of this class of graduates than they were at that time. It will be appropriate to this occasion to recall and emphasize some of these arguments. It is true that the technical teaching of the medical sciences is nearly the same in the various

schools, and a thoroughly practical education can be obtained by a well-qualified student in any of the large number scattered throughout the States. But we must not overlook the fact that the future professional rank and standing of the students is influenced by the particular school which he attends and from which he is graduated. The school impresses its own reputation indelibly upon his professional character. A diploma from certain medical colleges is a passport to almost certain success. In like manner the influence of the association of students with one another and with the teachers tends powerfully to form the future habits of thought and action of the students. Hence, it is a question of the first importance in the education of persons for any given employment or profession that they attend the school which has the highest ideals of the service which the student is about to enter, and the largest facilities for teaching its special technical and practical branches. In such a school the very atmosphere is surcharged with the spiritual life of the sciences taught, and the student is constantly inspired to high endeavor for excellence in all of his studies by daily association with sympathetic classmates striving to achieve the same success. This fact alone would justify the establishment of medical colleges devoted to the education of intending medical missionaries.

But there are other considerations quite as important. The missionary medical student should have a wider range of studies than the curriculum of the ordinary medical school provides. Climatology, epidemiology, pharmacology, mineralogy, are im-

portant accessory sciences which he should learn. To these may be added the minute study of foods and their preparation, such domestic arts as relate to personal hygiene, and potentiality and uses of natural remedies, as water, heat, electricity. He should be practically skilled in every department of laboratory work, such as chemistry, biology, bacteriology, pathology, and physiology.

Many of these subjects may seem trivial and unimportant, but when it is considered that the medical missionary is to practice his profession far removed from those aids which surround the physician in civilized communities, it is apparent that every condition of education which multiplies his resources adds greatly to his usefulness. Hippocrates wisely commended to the graduates of the school of Cos the study of the whole circle of the physical sciences.

Another important result from this training in a special school is the opportunity that is offered the faculty to study the peculiarities of each member of the class, and thus be able to furnish missionary societies with accurate information in regard to candidates applying for appointment. The New York Institute was in constant communication with the secretaries of the different missionary bodies, and enabled the societies to make judicious selections of medical graduates for their various fields of service. In some instances the appointments were made without consulting the managers of the Institute, and serious consequences followed. The school, therefore, becomes a most important aid to missionary organizations in the selection of their missionaries.

Another advantage of the medical missionary college has been found in the association during student life of persons from the different religious denominations in attendance, and the cordial relations which spring up among them while preparing for the performance of the same future duties. The fellowship and brotherhood thus established during the susceptible period of student life remains a permanent bond of union between persons of a common faith. The hundred or more medical graduates who during their pupilage were housed and taught, in part, by the International Medical Missionary Society, of New York, formed an association to maintain a constant correspondence with one another after they had gone to their separate fields. Thus, over one hundred missionary stations in all parts of the world have been brought into sympathetic relations, though the missionaries themselves belong to the different religious denominations.

THE AMERICAN MEDICAL MISSIONARY COLLEGE.

The arguments in favor of an independent medical missionary college, rightly situated, and properly organized and equipped for thorough work, can be greatly multiplied, but all combined cannot have the force and sufficiency of the living presence of the American Medical Missionary College, with its graduating class about to receive its diplomas, legal testimonials that the members of this class are duly qualified to practice the art of medicine. And my convictions of the value of such a college are greatly strengthened by a personal

examination of its organization and management. It has been very emphatically and persistently alleged against such a medical school that it will lower the standard of medical education and become a resort of a class of students who are wholly unfit to enter upon the study of medicine. It is gratifying to find that these predictions have in no particular been realized in this College. On the contrary, it has in many respects raised the standard of medical education, as compared with even our most advanced schools.

In the first place, the required educational qualification of the applicant for admission to the school is placed very high, but not too high, if due regard is had to the requirements of the missionary service. Certainly no unworthy and incompetent student can find access to the classes of this school if this standard is maintained. The preparatory studies for admission to the higher classes are exceptionally well chosen, and indicate that those who have passed a successful examination have attained to a high grade of scholarship.

Again, the method of teaching is altogether excellent. The teacher and student are brought into such close personal relations that they must necessarily understand each other. The art of teaching is acquired, not inborn; a study, not a gift. Accurate knowledge is essential to the success of the teacher, but it alone does not insure success. John Hunter, the most scientific surgeon of the past three centuries, could not retain a class of students. He understood the subject, but he did not understand the student. The successful teacher must maintain a per-

sonal contact with his pupils so close and familiar that he is able to adapt his instructions to each. An experience of forty years in teaching medical students, long since convinced me that the recitation in small classes is the most successful method of meeting the wants of the individual student. Placed in these relations, no student can escape the critical questions of the teacher, nor can the teacher escape the often tantalizing questions of the pupil. Bacon says: "He that questioneth much, learneth much." In the class-room both the instructor and the pupil have unlimited opportunities to ask questions, and as a result the inapt student is kept abreast of his class, while all profit by the questions and the explanations.

The modern student of medicine is to be congratulated that the old-time lecture as a method of teaching is being superseded by the class recitations, the laboratories, the hospitals, and the clinics. The passing of the ancient professor, in evening dress, with well-conned manuscript from which he rarely raised his gold-rimmed spectacles, gives place to the instructor, clad in his dissecting-room and laboratory suit, whose hearty handshake of welcome assures the student that he is to be a co-laborer with his teacher in the fields of science.

But admirable as are the methods of teaching the more technical branches in this school, instruction in laboratory investigations of every kind which enter into a knowledge of the science and practice of medicine, is conducted along lines best adapted to render that knowledge (at all times and under all conditions) available. The location of the College in Chicago and

at Battle Creek gives the students extraordinary facilities for clinical and laboratory studies and work. In the large city, actual missionary duties are performed at the dispensaries and hospitals while the student is engaged in clinical studies; and this two-fold service teaches him practical lessons in organizing and managing such institutions in the mission field. At the Battle Creek Sanitarium the course of study in the investigation of disease, with the aid of numerous laboratories, the practical analysis and preparation of foods, the opportunities for observing and treating all forms of surgical operations under the most approved anti-septic conditions—all conspire to furnish the intending medical missionary student with ample means for perfecting himself as a practitioner of medicine and as a missionary in foreign lands.

A GREAT FUTURE.

The American Medical Missionary College has before it a future of great possibilities. Standing alone as the pioneer institution devoted exclusively to the training of those who have been chosen to go "before His face into every city and place whither he himself would come," it inaugurates a new era in the efforts to evangelize the world. It is an answer to the pathetic appeal of the Master to his disciples, "Pray ye . . . the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest." There is but one condition wanting to enable it to fulfil its great mission worthily and completely. It should have the sympathy, confidence, and support of all the Protestant denominations engaged in mis-

sionary work, and should become their medium of securing competent medical missionaries. By this means, endowments may be secured and the college placed on an independent and enduring basis.

Carlyle says, "The power to relieve human pain is a divine gift." How much greater is the gift which this diploma confers in endowing its recipient with power to cure all manner of diseases! But the diploma of the American Medical Missionary College has a higher significance and a nobler purpose than relieving the ills of the body. It endues these graduates with a mission which far transcends in its scope and character that of any other educational institution. That mission is clearly and forcibly expressed in the command of the Master, "Cure the sick, and tell them the Kingdom of God is at your door."



